

CONFIDENTIAL.]

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REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 2nd November 1901.

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I.—FOREIGN POLITICS.

2598. The *Indian Mirror* does not think that the mere fact that
The Afghan situation. Habibullah has ascended the throne of Kabul without opposition, or that affairs are quiet for the

INDIAN MIRROR,
26th Oct. 1901.

present, should lead the Government of India to suppose that the future administration of Afghanistan will be plain sailing. It firmly inclines to the belief that the Government has not yet passed the crisis, and that it may at any moment be called upon to decide serious issues in that country. In these circumstances, it does not approve of the Viceroy's projected tour, and would strongly advise the Government of India to remain for some time more at Simla.

The necessity of vigilant action becomes the more pronounced in view of the manner in which Russia is feeling her position in Afghanistan. The release of the six Afghan prisoners at Merv, is a stroke of diplomacy on Russia's part, which is nothing less than an attempt to court the friendship of the new Amir.

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

2599. The Hooghly correspondent of the *Bengalee* complains that the A police enquiry in the Hooghly police enquiry into the case of daring theft of gold ornaments to the value of about Rs. 1,000 perpetrated in the Ghutia bazar, is being conducted in an irregular, lax, and perfunctory manner. He calls the District Magistrate's attention to the matter which has created a sensation in the locality.

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(g)—Railways and communications, including canals and irrigation.

2600. The *Bengalee* desires to associate itself with the prayer of the The Darjeeling mails and the public to the Manager of the E. B. S. Railway that the Darjeeling mails might be stopped at Naihati to enable passengers desirous of entraining at that station to do so.

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2601. The Hooghly correspondent of the *Bengalee* complains of the Railway grievances. irregularity of the up and down trains running on the Naihati-Hooghly branch line over the Jubilee bridge, the result being that the travelling public are greatly inconvenienced and the delivery of letters, &c., by the post-office is delayed.

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2602. The *Bengalee* reiterates the grievances of third class passengers *Ibid.* on the E. I. Railway, viz., the overcrowding of carriages and the incivility of railway underlings and recommends the substitution of Indian ticket collectors on that line for Europeans and Eurasians, as has been done on the E. B. S. Railway. It adds to the catalogue of railway grievances, the pilfering of the contents of parcels, &c., and the inconveniences felt during the *pujahs* by the want of accommodation in third class carriages, and, to meet the former complaint, urges the appointment of detectives at the principal changing stations like Howrah, Assansole, Naihati junction, Mokameh, Mogul Serai, &c., and the running of special trains for the accommodation of superfluous passengers.

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(h)—General.

2603. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* learns that a private circular has been issued by Lord Curzon to the Heads of Departments, that one-fifth of the vacancies in the Secret circulars and domiciled Europeans. subordinate services shall be reserved for the domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, and thinks that, in view of the flutter in the public mind caused by the rumour, the best course for the authorities is to at once set the matter right by telling the real truth.

AMRITA BAZAR
PATRIKA,
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It gives instances of the leakage of official secrets by which the public was enabled to perceive the internal workings of an externally perfect Government,

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and makes out that it was to prevent peering into these disagreeable secrets that the Official Secrets Act was passed.

2604. The *Bengalee* complains that in spite of the Government order closing public offices on the occasion of the death of President McKinley and the Amir, several offices kept open. It mentions the Supply and Transport

Extra holidays in Government offices.
Department of the Storekeeper-General's office and the Post and Telegraph offices of Bogra, and is at a loss to understand how the peremptory orders of the Supreme Government could thus be transgressed.

2605. On the subject of the case between the Hon'ble Mr. Cotton and the planters of Assam, the *Indian Mirror* remarks that Mr. Cotton and the Assam planters.

the controversy may be described as a contest between capital, the planters, and labour, the coolies. The former, owing to its very influential position, never lacks championship, while the latter, especially in a country like India, must always appeal to the Government for redress of its grievances. Mr. Cotton, of course, has only done his duty in exposing the cause of the coolies, but it has cost him a great deal—the sympathy of his own countrymen. The controversy, which has been carried on by the planters, is mostly one-sided, and its force is entirely vitiated by its rancorous spirit.

The article concludes as follows:—

"We have, last of all, a word of advice for our countrymen. They must not be content with silent admiration of Mr. Cotton's bold and fearless advocacy of coolies' rights. They must convey it, in a suitable manner, to Mr. Cotton before he retires from the service. It is the duty of the Indian public to get up a fitting demonstration in honour of Mr. Cotton before he leaves India. The Indian National Congress, which will meet in this city in a few weeks, ought, in our opinion, to pass a special Resolution, in recognition of Mr. Cotton's efforts on behalf of the poor, defenceless coolies in Assam. The approval of the Indian public will perhaps be as great a solace to him in his retirement as the approval of his own conscience. Such English officials as Mr. Cotton, who do honour to the English nation, ought to receive the unqualified and whole-hearted support of the entire Indian community."

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

INDIAN MIRROR,
27th Oct. 1901.

2606. The *Indian Mirror* complains that, whereas in the good old days, the *pujah* was the signal of no end of merry making and rejoicing, it has now ceased to be enjoyable owing to the reduction of the number of holidays in mercantile and banking firms from twelve to four days. For this state of things, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which now practically rules the country, is to be primarily held responsible. It goes on to complain that Kalighat reeks with the innocent blood of goats and buffaloes, slaughtered in the sacred name of the goddess, and is not surprised that the sufferings of the Hindus on this account continue to increase and multiply. It cries for the abolition of this horrible butchery and the reversion of the Hindus to the purer faith of their ancestors, before they can hope to recover their lost national salvation.

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL
OF POLICE, L. P.,
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
The 2nd November 1901.

H. B. ST. LEGER,
Asst. to the Inspr.-General of Police, L. P.